GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Prepared Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

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General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

for

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Education

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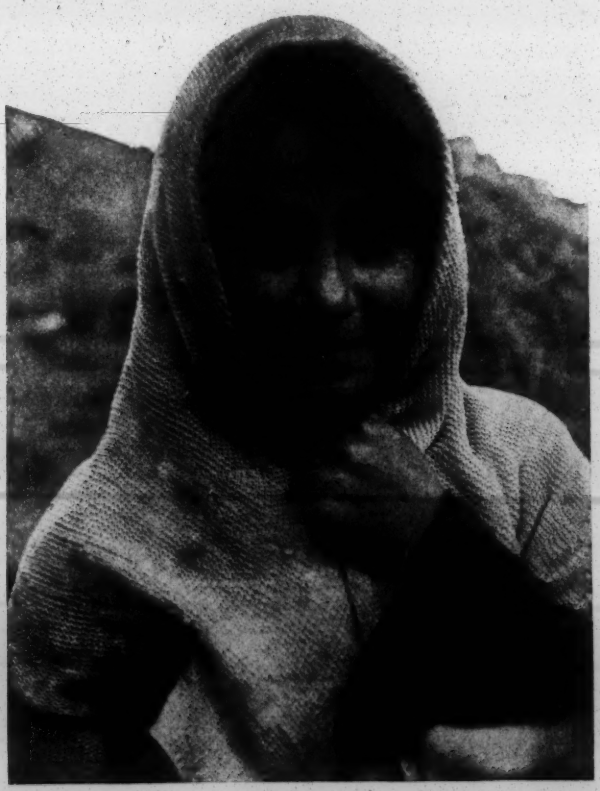

A Georgian Mountain Girl of Gergeti on the Slopes of Kasbek

(See Bulletin No. 2)

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Where Our Imports Come From: Camphor

FIRST of a series of bulletins issued by the National Geographic Society on "Where our imports come from" is that dealing with the camphor industry in Formosa, now owned by Japan.

"Formosa holds a practical monopoly in the world's market of this valuable drug," says Alice Ballantine Kirjassoff, writer of a communication to The Society on this subject.

"The life of a camphor worker is indeed an adventurous one; he is never safe from the Formosa head-hunters. Although a woodsman with an axe never moves except in the company of an armed guard, there is always danger of an ambush.

Head-Hunters Menace Trees But Protect Workers

"Tales of the camphor workers recall the days of our pioneer fathers in the times of tomahawk, the poisoned arrow, and the scalping-knife. And yet if this menace had not existed, the camphor forests would have disappeared long ago. Thanks to the head-hunters, there are still large tracts of virgin camphor forests in Formosa.

"Camphor trees grow best on moderate, well-drained slopes, not over 4,000 feet in elevation, where the sun's rays can reach them.

"Nowhere else in the world have these trees attained such height and girth as in Formosa. In the past, trees with a basal circumference of from 35 to 40 feet have been noted, but these have inevitably fallen victims to the woodsman's axe. Perhaps in the uncharted forests, where the savage still holds sway, more of these noble specimens still grow unscathed. At present a camphor tree with a basal circumference of 20 feet is considered a very ample specimen.

Camphor Tree is Plutocrat of Forest Family

"In point of view of value, few trees can rival the camphor. An average tree, say with a basal circumference of 12 feet, will yield about 50 piculs of camphor (approximately 6,660 pounds), which, at the present market price, is worth about $5,000.

"Strictly speaking, there are no camphor forests, as the camphor laurel is only one of a number of trees growing together. The camphor trees are unusually beautiful, with shapely trunks and wide-spreading branches profusely covered with graceful leaves of a soft green.

How Native Stills Operate

"Native stills are scattered here and there throughout the districts where crude camphor is collected, packed in tins, and carried down precipitous mountain paths on coolies' backs to the nearest railway line, whence it goes to the refinery at Taihoku.

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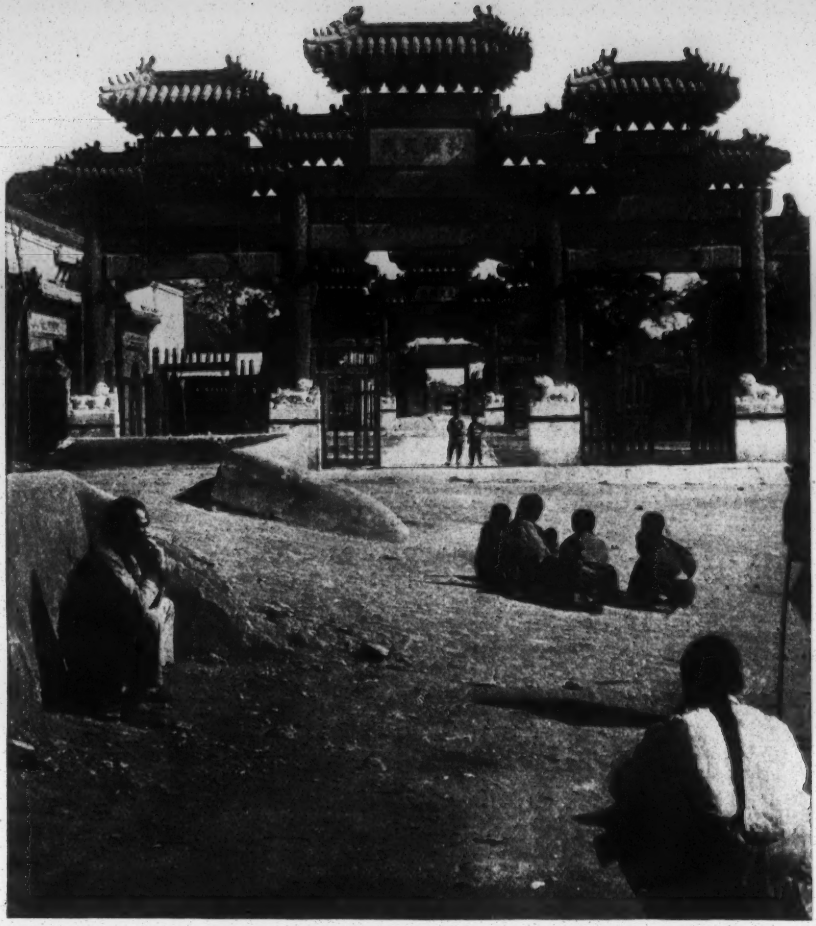

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PEKING, CHINA: A TYPICAL GATEWAY (See Bulletin No. 3)

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Caucasia: Traditional Home of the White Race

WHILE various anti-Bolshevist governments seek a resting place and capital at one end of the range and the fabulous oil hoards of Baku at the other invite the covetous, the long line of mountains which separate Europe from Asia gives promise of once more attaining the headline position it so often has held throughout the ages.

Made up of four hundred miles of majestic peaks, in three ridges, the Caucasus stretches from northwest to southeast like a petrified wave whose northeastern face mounts to the snowy crest, but whose southwestern front, facing toward Turkey seems dashed into countless precipices by the titantic forces of nature.

Once the Caucasus was a fabled land of rivers of gold and rich vineyards, of orchards bent low with the weight of luscious fruit, and of storied hills rich in all the known minerals of the age.

Range Was Latter-Day Tower of Babel

The Caucasus is the most interesting rabbit warren of humanity on the globe. For uncounted ages, various peoples sifted through the secluded valleys leaving a fraction of their number in some remote spot so that at one time El Azizi said that there were 300 tribes and dialects in the region 650 miles long and 100 miles broad, which he called the "Mountain of Languages."

Strabo spoke of 70 races of men, some of them armed with poisoned arrows and wearing skin shoes with spiked soles. Troglodytes there were and are. The Caucasus is a sort of three-ring group of natural marvels compressed between Europe and Asia, between the Black Sea and the Caspian.

On the European slope, the Caucasus is flanked by the Cossacks of the Don, the Kuban and the Terek, along whose banks the famous Tolstoy served as a young soldier.

On the Asiatic side, there are the new republics of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, partly carved from Russian, partly from Turkish lands.

Islands of Humanity In Sea of Mountains

Within the Caucasus itself there are still many strange tribes. Most handsome of all are the Mingrelians and their neighbors the Imeretians. The Gurians and Svans, the Khevsurs, Tushes and Abkhasians, the Kabards, the Ossetians, Lesghians, Tchetchens and Tatars—all are huddled in a region so lacking in roads or modern communications that each tribe is as isolated as though it possessed a continent of its own.

The people who have left the deepest impress on the Caucasus, although most of them emigrated to Turkey in 1864, are the Tcherkess or Circassians. The loveliness of their women forms the lure of countless harem tales, and the daring of the men furnishes the contrast to the houri-like charm of the Circassian maidens who made harems popular, not only along the beautiful Bosphorus, but in romantic literature as well.

"The stills are operated in a simple manner. Camphor chips are placed in a chip retort over boiling water, and as the camphor vaporizes it passes through pipes into submerged vats, which are so arranged that cool water from a mountain stream can run over them to accelerate crystallization. After the camphor has crystalized the vats are opened, and the product is placed on wooden troughs to allow whatever free oil there may be to drain off. This oil will yield 90 per cent of crude camphor in the process of refining."

Bulletin No. 1, May 3, 1920 (Over)

A "CLOSE-UP" OF A GEORGIAN BOY WHO IS ONE OF THREE DRIVERS DIRECTING TWELVE OXEN DRAWING A PLOW (See Bulletin No. 2)

These 12-ox teams form one of the curious sights of this region of the Caucasus. The twelve animals draw a single plow.

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The Opening Door in Asia

WITH several European cities, which were alternately raked by the fire of foe and friend, proposing to preserve their hollow-eyed and ghastly ruins as a reminder of the shame of 1914 and the glory of four years later, we are liable to ignore a more significant change which is taking place in Asia.

Roads taking the place of barriers; communication instead of exclusion; picturesque landmarks of the past sacrificed to unromantic modernity—these are the changes that are altering the appearance of the Chinese city and the life of its people.

Nineteen years ago, Yuan Shih Kai demolished the city walls of Tientsin. Almost immediately the life of the city changed, but the experiment was not soon repeated. Then came the revolution and in many cities where Chinese and Manchus lived in contiguous walled cities, the Tatar portion was razed to the ground when the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty came.

Hangchow the Paris of China

Prominent among these cities where the Manchu or Tatar portion was burned was the most beautiful city of China, Hangchow. Between the Chinese city and famous West Lake, about whose beauties Chinese poets were going into ecstacies of five-footed verse many years before Homer told of the walls of Troy, there was a Tatar city.

When this was burned, the eyesore of a ruined waste stood between the Chinese and their beloved lake, where pleasure boats swung lightly at anchor or noiselessly traversed the placid waters, and as a background to this waste land a towering wall shut off all view of their beauty spot.

There still remained the inner wall which had separated the Chinese and Tatar cities and hence the outer wall was useless. Progressive spirits not only brought about the destruction of the wall that hid the lake, but laid out a modern city with wide macadamized streets constructed of the material which had once been wall.

"Speeding Up" Life in China

Rickshas appeared in regions where only sedan chairs could move before, and since one man can pull a ricksha easier and faster than two can carry a chair, life in Hangchow began to speed up. Soon an automobile appeared and cross city streets, connecting the lake front with the railway station, were laid out.

This meant widening the narrow lanes to modern thoroughfares, and the fronts of hundreds of shops had to be cut away. Then came the edict that whenever new building operations were started in any part of the city the front wall of the new structure should be moved back several feet. This gave a cog wheel effect where old and new structures alternated, but the move

The Tcherkess gave to the Caucasus and the fancy dress ball the Tcherkeska, the familiar skirted costume of the warlike Cossack and the lithe Georgian grandee. It is the original opera bouffe uniform, with a narrow waist and flaring skirts above soft boots without heels. This costume is also distinguished by eighteen cartridge cases ranged across the chest, which is made imposing not only by this perambulant ammunition dump, but also by the fact that the upper portion of the outer garment is left unfastened so that the dark shirt below shows wider and wider toward the top.

Weapons a Part of Daily Dress

Formerly, real cartridges gave a truly martial aspect to the dress in which a straight sword worn diagonally across the front and another just as sharp suspended from the side were almost the only visible weapons until the automatic revolver came into fashion.

But comparative wealth and peace overtook the Georgians and the other town dwellers who wore the striking dress and gradually these cartridges were changed for decorative imitations. Some of them were made of ebony at one end and ivory at the other.

Thus the Caucasian Beau Brummel could vary the color scheme by reversing the decorations so that a white costume would be trimmed in black from cartridge case to dagger and a dark tcherkeska could be enlivened by ivory cartridges and ivory handled daggers hanging from a shining silver belt.

Modernity has gone even farther. One of these cartridge cases is now sometimes used for a fountain pen and the ultra fastidious dandy sometimes has hollow decorations in whose solid gold shell is concealed rich perfume for the moustache.

North Caucasus is the Minnesota of Russia

The North Caucasus is not distinguished solely by legendary lore and fancy dress manhood. The broad fields which sweep gently up toward the slopes produce some of Russia's most abundant grain crops and form an important field for the sale and use of modern agricultural machinery.

A little deeper among the foothills, hundreds of thousands of sheep roam the slopes, climbing toward the eternal snowfields and 125-mile glacier in summer, returning to the valleys of the Kuban and the Terek when the cold of winter sweeps through the few passes that pierce the long mountain barrier.

Sheltered among the hills and offering wonderful mountain views of the main ridge of the Caucasus, which reaches a height three times that of Mount Washington, lie the North Caucasus Mineral Baths at Pyatigorsk and Kislovodsk, whose popularity among the wealthy was second only to that of the winter resorts of the Crimea.

"The Drink of Heroes" a Mineral Water

At Kislovodsk is the famous "Narzan" spring, with a flow of a half a million gallons a day, in whose effervescent waters bathing was cheap, although the water when bottled commanded a high price in European cities and even in Persia and Siberia. The Circassians called this sparkling carbonic water "the drink of heroes."

North Caucasia, or Cis-Caucasia, abounds in oil, although it is only at Maikop and Grozny that any flow is found to compare with the world-famed petroleum fields at Baku. When the revolution unseated the English managers at Grozny, thousands of barrels of oil were flooding the countryside while the workmen sought to imprison their managers as a guarantee that their self-raised wages would be forthcoming.

So much has been written about Georgia, Armenia and the Azerbaijan republic south of the mountain frontier that few realize that just north of the historic rock wall between Europe and Asia there lies one of the richest regions in the world.

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How Archangel Troops Were Fed

ONE of the most arduous, and perhaps, most thankless, tasks assigned troops of the American Expeditionary Force was that in conjunction with French and British units operating in the Archangel region of Northern Russia.

Relatives and friends of American troops have an especial interest in the Murman railway since it is the artery which supplied the allied forces in north Russia with food, clothing and munitions during the long winter months when Archangel itself was closed to shipping by ice.

Murmansk is the northern terminus of the Murman railway, a single-track line which connects the ice-free port with Petrograd by way of Kandalaksha, Kem, Petrozavodsk, and Zvanda, 660 of the 900 miles of the line having been constructed since 1914 in the face of some of the greatest obstacles ever encountered in civil engineering.

Building Began Under Russian Empire

War work on the Murman railway began January 1, 1915, with the appointment by the Russian government of Vladamir Goriachkovsky as the engineer. At his disposal were placed 100,000 workmen recruited from all parts of the empire.

The line had to run through a terrain presenting the most discouraging difficulties—swamps, bogs, frozen lakes, and almost impenetrable forests. In Russia's peril, construction work could not wait until the advent of spring. Soundings were made through the ice by means of long iron rods to determine earth contours, in order to establish the safest roadbeds in swampy country. Much of the surveying during the long nights of the Arctic winter had to be done by lantern light.

The German propaganda bureau spread reports of frightful mortality among the workmen, but as a matter of fact, although the laborers lived under the most primitive conditions, in tents, the death rate was extremely low. About 1 per cent of those taken ill succumbed to scurvy.

Foundations Melted When Spring Came

It is true that when the first trains began to run over the partly completed road there were occasions when the track suddenly subsided, due to the fact that the rails had been laid upon what were thought to be rocks, but which proved, with the thaw of spring, to be ice. Under the circumstances, however, these mishaps were comparatively rare, and no serious accidents resulted. The swampy character of the right of way is indicated by the fact that there are 1,110 bridges on the line.

To maintain American and Allied troops operating along the Archangel-Vologda line in the winter of 1918-1919, when the harbor of Archangel was sealed, supplies were shipped by steamer to Murmansk, where they were

was in the right direction. The city which Marco Polo had praised so highly was becoming modern.

Hangchow was not alone in tearing down walls and building modern roads on the site of ancient barriers. In a score of Chinese cities the ancient bricks, six times the size of our own, and the squared stone that was sometimes found began to take on new value and the wall became a quarry for anyone who needed building material.

Missions Mounted on Walls of the Mings

Nanking had one of the longest city walls to be found anywhere and the Tatar city there was very large. Not long after the revolution, the Tatar walls began to crumble before the picks of pygmies who razed what giants had raised and creaking wheelbarrows, laden with bricks and stone, filled the streets of the huge city, which had so much agricultural land within the 32-mile wall that it could have withstood a siege for years. One of the finest of modern missionary school buildings rests on a foundation made of material first used in the city wall built by the Mings more than five hundred years ago.

Safety did not necessarily come with this removal of the protecting wall, but a sense of security did. The most crowded portions had sometimes been separated from farm land that could be bought for a song, simply because a gateless wall filled the distance between. Chinese standing on the top of the dividing line of rampart may have sighed, "How near and yet how far," but most of them chose to live within the refuge from robbers and bandits which the wall provided.

When Human Beings Were Traffic Carriers

In the north, the demolition of the wall did not make so much difference, for the cities were widely spread out and wheeled vehicles and draft animals were common. But in the south, cities were much more crowded and almost no traffic was pulled. Almost every pound of a tremendous trade was carried.

Now the wall-destroying move has reached Canton and within a few weeks electric street cars will rush along on the site of a wall four centuries old. The already large suburbs are growing at an increasing rate and the pressure that made Canton's streets so narrow that they were picturesque has now relented so that maloos or horse roads will traverse the city in increasing numbers.

When good roads supplant protecting walls in China, things will begin to move. The sleeping East is waking up and when the sound-deadening barrier of a Ming Dynasty wall gives way to the clang of the warning bell on an American-made electric car, the waking is not likely to be long delayed.

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Australia and New Zealand: Often Out of Focus in Our Mental Geography

THE recent proposal made by Viscount Jellicoe that a powerful Far Eastern fleet be created, toward which Australia would be expected to contribute 20 per cent and New Zealand 5 per cent, again called attention to the growing importance of a far away corner of the world.

"Usually, in our mental geography, Australia and New Zealand are conveniently grouped, yet one of the first surprises awaiting the tourist from the Northern Hemisphere is to find that Australia and New Zealand may not be regarded as two islands of like appearance, differing mainly in size; near neighbors which may be treated as a unit," says a communication to the National Geographic Society from Herbert E. Gregory.

"New Zealand is nearly twice as far from Australia as Bermuda is from New York, and is not only east, but also south.

Applying the Yardstick of Latitude

"Four days' travel across a chilly sea is required for the traverse from Wellington to Sydney, and after exchanging the chill midsummer climate of the New Zealand Lake region for the heat of Adelaide, one readily accepts the evidence of the map that the southern coast of the Australian mainland has the latitude of central New Jersey, while the southernmost of the three islands which comprise the Dominion of New Zealand occupies the position of southern Newfoundland.

"In climate and vegetation the two dominions are as unlike as Norway and South Carolina. New Zealand is a land of mountains, gorges, rivers and fiords. The higher peaks of the South Island are eternally snow-capped and the glaciers of its southern Alps rival those of Switzerland. The surrounding seas are too cold for corals. Among the mountains of the North Island volcanic fires are still active and the geysers and hot springs are little less impressive than those of the Yellowstone Park. The aboriginal inhabitants of New Zealand, at the time of their discovery by Captain Cook, were the most advanced of all the South Pacific races, while the aborigines of Australia are the lowest in intelligence of all human beings.

"Australia is in no sense inferior to New Zealand in geographic interest, but lofty peaks, profound canyons, and active volcanoes are lacking; its rivers are unimpressive and its permanent lakes small and few in number; it is a continent composed of plains interrupted by ridges and mountain knobs."

unloaded and sent by rail to Kandalaksha, a distance of 170 miles, and thence transported by sledges across the frozen White Sea to Archangel, 200 miles to the east.

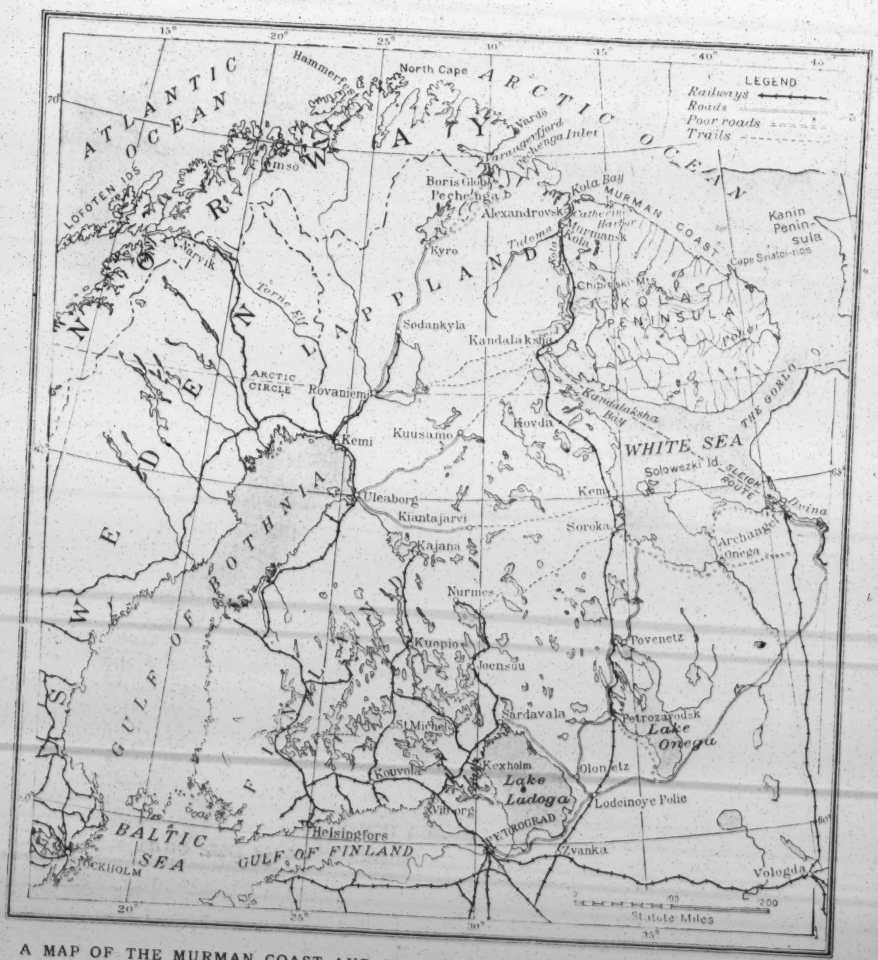
Even before the boom occasioned by the decision of the Allies and America to dispatch an expeditionary force to Russia, Murmansk had grown to be quite a settlement, with its 3,500 to 4,000 inhabitants augmented from week to week by refugees whose number fluctuated from a few hundred to 3,000.

Revolution Halted Growth of Port

As was the case with all building operations in the empire, the Russian revolution interfered materially with the growth of the port, which is situated on the east bank of the Kola Inlet, 30 miles south of the Arctic shore. Most of the buildings are of one story and are constructed of unhewn logs, chinked with native moss. The streets under the Russian regime were entirely of dirt.

The Murman (a corruption of Norman) is the name given to the 260-mile stretch of Arctic seaboard which forms the northern boundary of the Kola Peninsula, a vast plateau having an average elevation of 1,000 feet and covered with swamps, peat-bogs, forests, and lakes, lying almost entirely within the Arctic Circle and embracing an area as large as England and Wales combined.

Before the war the Murman Coast was practically uninhabited throughout the greater part of the year.



A MAP OF THE MURMAN COAST AND THE TERRITORY THROUGH WHICH RUNS THE NEW MURMAN RAILWAY (See Bulletin No. 4)

The Murman Railway was the artery which supplied with food, clothing and munitions the American and Allied forces in Northern Russia during the winter months.